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BRITANNIA RM-3A1 GUIDELINES

Adopted by City Council August 9, 1983

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NOTE: The guidelines in this report are organized under standardized headings which are to be used for all future guideline reports. As a consequence, there are gaps in the numbering sequence where no guidelines apply under a standardized heading. For example, heading "4.1 Site Area" is omitted from this report since there are no applicable guidelines.

The headings and heading numbers of Section 4 correspond to those in the Regulations section of the District Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law to allow easy cross referencing.

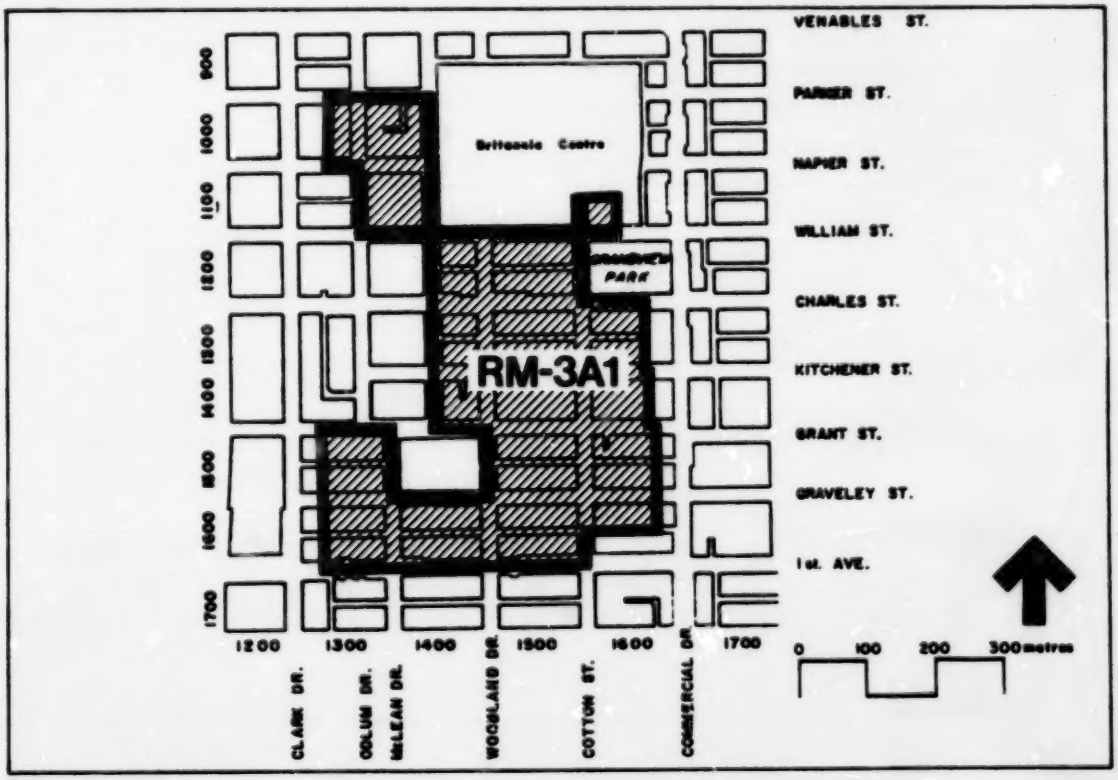
1 APPLICATION AND INTENT

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the RM-3A1 District Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law for developments in Britannia (Figure 1). The guidelines should be consulted in seeking approval for conditional uses or the relaxation of regulations. They may also be helpful in designing developments involving outright approval.

The RM-3A1 zoning, coupled with the guidelines, is intended to help development achieve the goals of the Grandview-Woodland Area Policy Plan Part 3: Britannia Area Plan, endorsed by City Council in April 1983. The plan's goals emphasize providing a variety of housing types; providing housing for a variety of household types, especially families with children; and ensuring compatibility of new development with existing buildings and neighbourhood character.

The plan also describes the heritage character of Britannia and foresees both compatible redevelopment, as well as retention and rehabilitation of existing houses. Ideally, redevelopment would occur in a selective manner, whereby new construction would replace smaller houses or houses in poor condition. Houses in good condition, and with some heritage merit or neighbourhood character, would be candidates for rehabilitation, conversion, additions, or infill.

Figure 1. Britannia RM-3A1 Zoning District



2 GENERAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Neighbourhood Character

The minimal redevelopment of Britannia has resulted in much of the original housing stock being retained. These original houses create a specific heritage character for Britannia and provide a link to Vancouver's past.

New development should:

(a) Respect the existing streetscape and adjacent buildings with designs that complement their character.

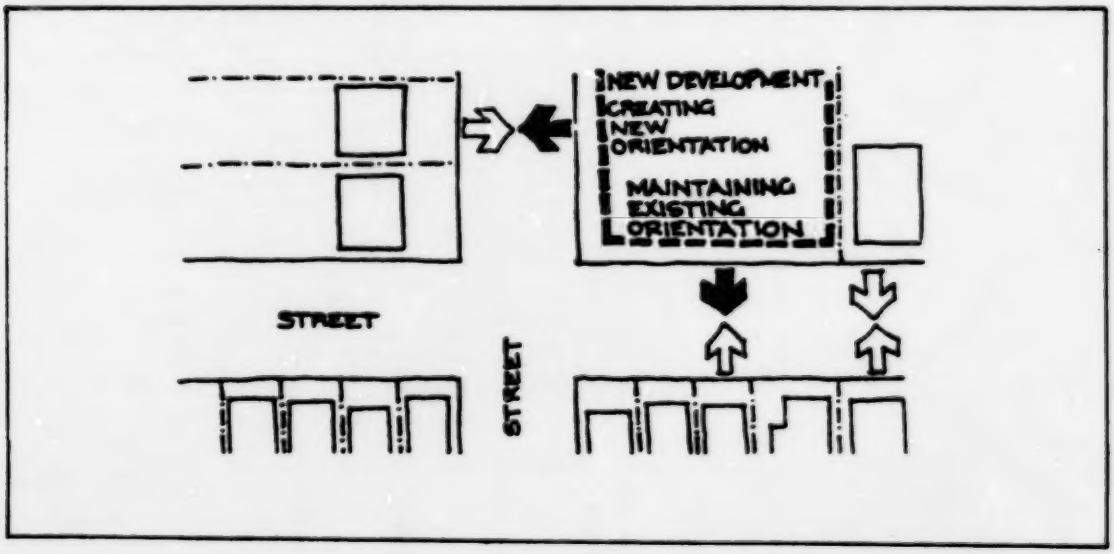
(b) Retain groupings of original houses to help maintain the existing streetscape character through infill and conversion schemes. Infill should be compatible in scale and character with the existing house.

(c) Respect existing buildings by renovating them in a manner which is sensitive to the architectural components which compose their character.

2.3 Orientation

As a result of the original subdivision pattern, the orientation of housing in Britannia can be both east-west and north-south on a single block. This condition creates the impression of parts of the street being treated as a side yard and results in a disorganized appearance. New development with more than one dwelling unit on corner sites should establish an image of frontage on both streets as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Example of New Development Establishing Frontage on Two Streets



2.4 Views

Distant views to the North Shore mountains, downtown, and False Creek are one of Britannia's best features. The foreground views at the base of the slope along the western edge of Britannia are not desirable because of the poor visual image of the adjacent industrial area.

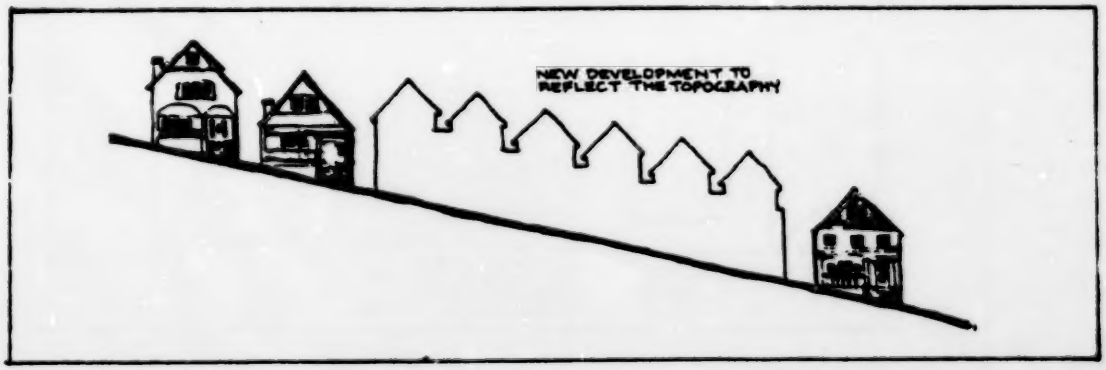
New development should exploit the excellent far views while respecting existing private views by careful siting and massing to minimize view blockage. Development along the western border of Britannia across from the industrial area should locate units above grade to obtain the far views (Figure 3). This will also help minimize the impact of the view to the industrial area.

Figure 3. Possible Form of New Development Along Industrial Edge to Exploit Views

2.5 Topography

Britannia's topography consists of a steep slope to the west. The scale of the older houses allows them to step down the hill in a manner which respects the topography and gives Britannia a recognizable character. New development should reflect the topography by stepping down the hill (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Example of New Development Responding to Topography



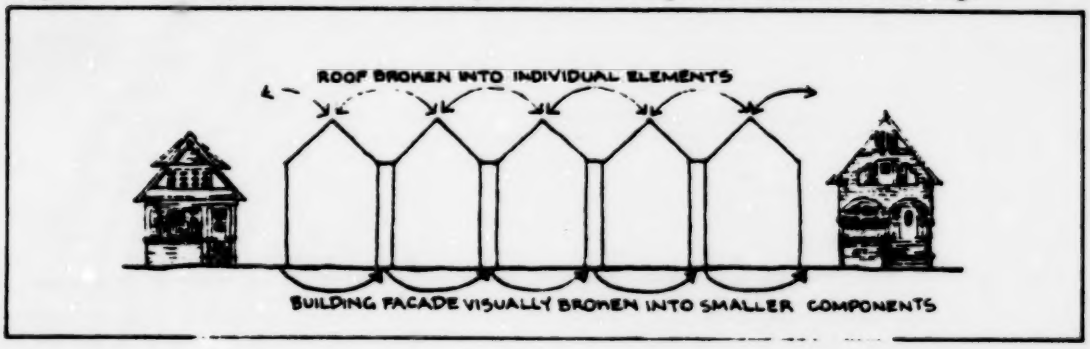
4 GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO THE REGULATIONS OF THE ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT BY-LAW

4.2 Frontage

The predominant lot width of 33 feet in conjunction with the individual house creates a strong incremental rhythm and strong unit identity. Some newer apartment development has disrupted this rhythm with building masses that have an uninterrupted frontage of four to five lots.

New development with a frontage greater than one lot should reflect the incremental rhythm and massing of the existing houses by visually breaking the frontage into individual components that have a vertical emphasis. Strong unit identity should be expressed by breaking the roof into individual elements (Figure 5).

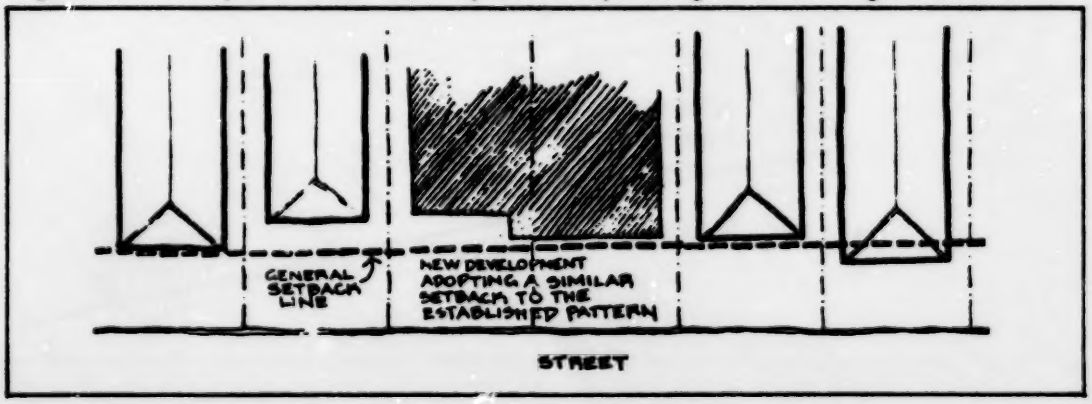
Figure 5. Example of New Development Creating Incremental Frontage



4.4 Front Yard

The front yard building setbacks vary in Britannia, with a consistent setback character more apparent in some blocks than in others. New development should respect generally consistent setbacks by adopting a similar setback, or respond to inconsistent setbacks by varying its own setback if more than one lot is involved (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Example of New Development Responding to Existing Setbacks



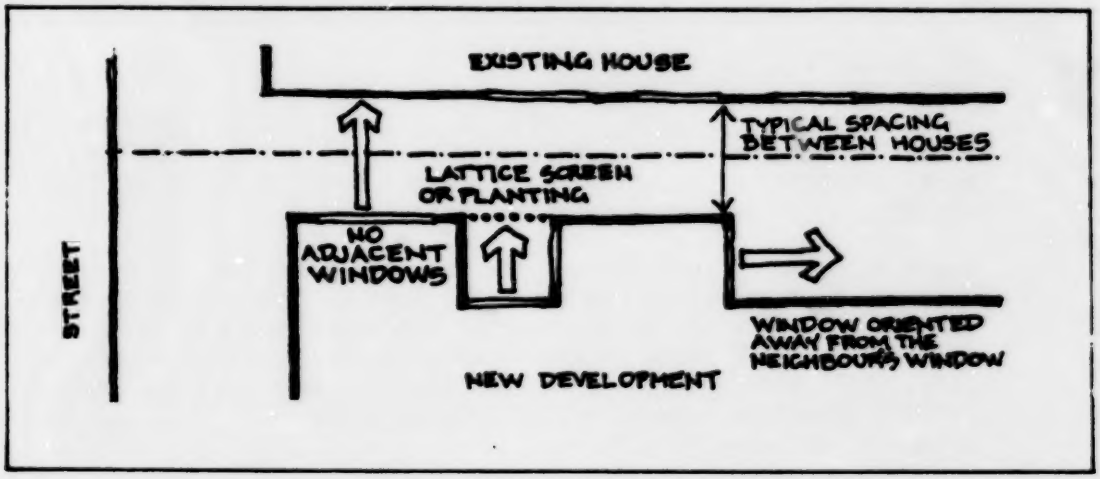
4.5 Side Yards

The spacing between existing houses created by their side yards results in a rhythm that is characteristic of Britannia. New development should:

(a) Respond to the existing spacing between houses by assuming a similar relationship, and avoiding overly large side yards which disrupt the existing character.

(b) Respect the privacy of adjacent properties by locating or screening windows and openings along side yards so they do not face any adjacent windows, openings or private areas (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Example of Side Yard Treatment



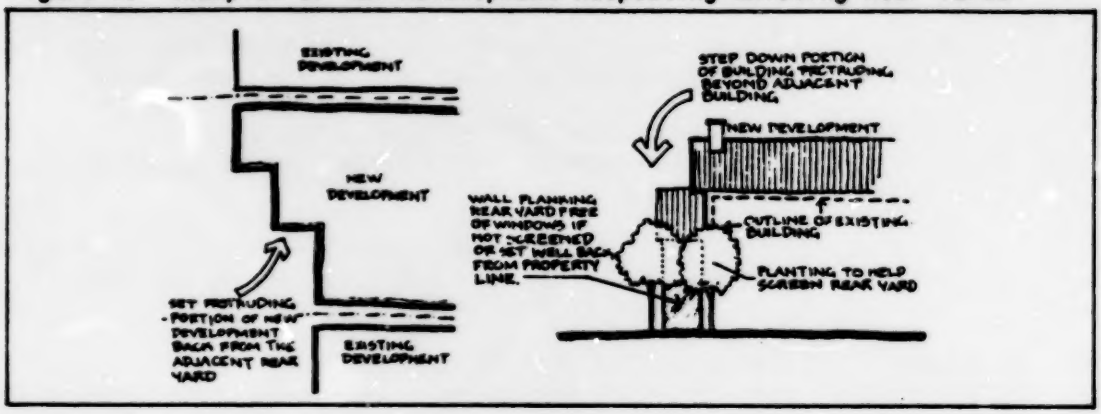
4.6 Rear Yard

New development at a density greater than that of the original houses can result in increased site coverage. This increase can create privacy and shadowing problems for adjacent properties due to more building development in the rear yard.

New development should respect the privacy and livability of adjacent properties by minimizing the impact of intrusion into the rear yard beyond the rear line of adjacent buildings. This may be accomplished by stepping the building down one storey, or by locating the protruding portion far from any adjacent building. When new development protrudes beyond the established building line of adjacent lots, overlooking should be minimized by screening or orienting windows away from adjacent rear yards.

Figure 8 illustrates how these guidelines may be achieved.

Figure 8. Examples of New Development Respecting Existing Rear Yards

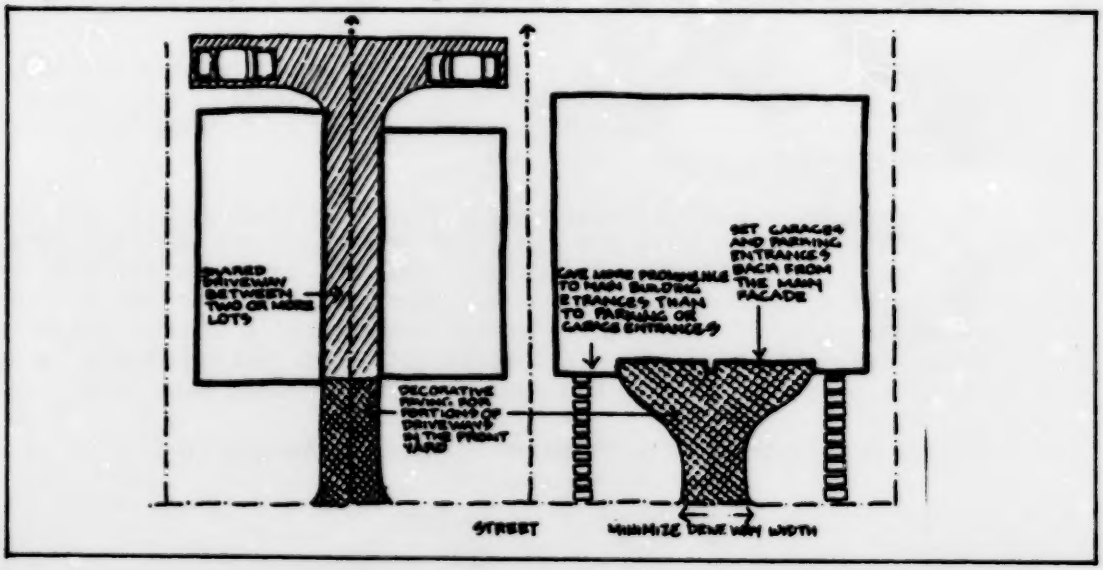

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT
NEW DEVELOPMENT
SET PROTRUDING PORTION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT BACK FROM THE ADJACENT REAR YARD
EXISTING DEVELOPMENT
STEP DOWN PORTION OF BUILDING PROTRUDING BEYOND ADJACENT BUILDING
NEW DEVELOPMENT
WALL PLANNING REAR YARD FREE OF WINDOWS IF NOT SCREENED OR SET WELL BACK FROM PROPERTY LINE
OUTLINE OF EXISTING BUILDING
PLANTING TO HELP SCREEN REAR YARD

4.9 Off-Street Parking and Loading

Britannia has some blocks without lanes which makes it difficult to provide access to parking. When access to parking is not possible from the lane, parking that is accessible from the front yard should be designed to minimize negative visual image and impact.

New development should respect the existing front yard by providing a driveway to the rear of the site if a lane does not exist. If possible, a single joint driveway to the rear of the site should be developed between adjacent lots. Parking areas, structures, or entrances should be compatibile with and less prominent than the principal building, and parking structures should not be located closer to the street than the principal building (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Examples of Parking Treatment Where Lane Does Not Exist


SHARED DRIVEWAY BETWEEN TWO OR MORE LOTS
DECORATIVE PAVING FOR PORTIONS OF DRIVEWAYS IN THE FRONT YARD
SET GARAGES AND PARKING ENTRANCES BACK FROM THE MAIN FACADE
GIVE MORE PROMINENCE TO MAIN BUILDING ENTRANCES THAN TO PARKING OR GARAGE ENTRANCES
STREET
MINIMIZE DRIVEWAY WIDTH

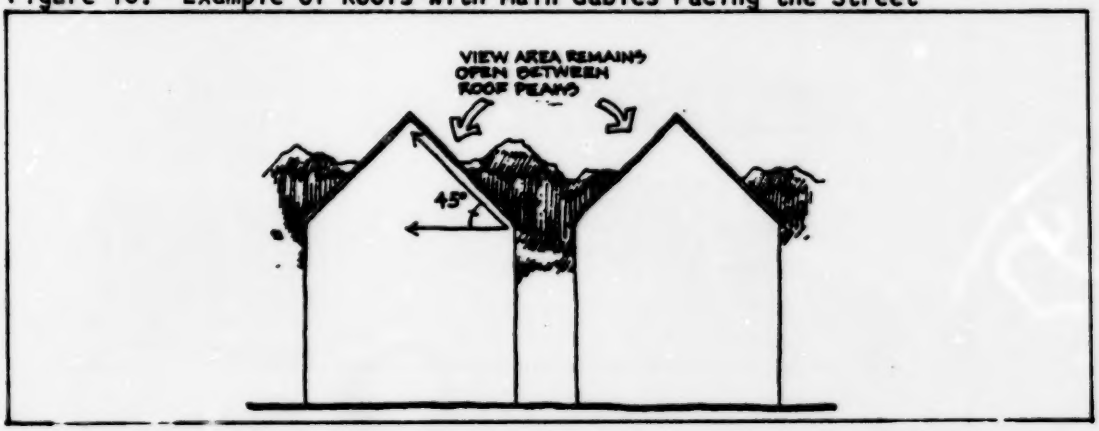
5 ARCHITECTURAL COMPONENTS

5.1 Roofs and Chimneys

The characteristic roof form in Britannia is a steeply sloped roof with the peaks and valleys facing the street. An open view area exists between adjacent roof peaks. Secondary roof forms are common over porches, entry ways, and projections.

New development should incorporate these characteristic roof forms and orientation. The main roof gable should face the street and have a minimum roof slope of 45 degrees, or more if possible, to open and enhance views to the downtown, North Shore mountains or False Creek (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Example of Roofs With Main Gables Facing the Street



5.3 Entrances, Stairs, and Porches

Porches and large entrance stairs help give Britannia its character and define building entrances. Porches are usually located above the ground level and are recessed, creating negative space and an articulated facade (Figure 11).

New development should:

(a) Incorporate porches or equivalent recessed spaces in new designs to maintain the existing character and create entrance identity.

(b) Ensure that renovations respond to the character of existing porches by maintaining a sense of openness and transparency and avoiding flat boring facades.

(c) Ensure that main entrance stairs have a solid appearance.

(d) Identify entrances to infill development so they are clearly visible and accessible from the street.

5.4 Balconies

Original houses in Britannia have recessed rather than projecting balconies that create a sense of depth to the facade. New development should integrate any balconies with the facade to respond to the character created by existing recessed balconies.

Figure 11. Example of Characteristic Porches and Balconies

5.5 Exterior Walls and Finishing

Painted horizontal wood siding and wood shingles are the most common exterior finishing materials found in Britannia, and are most characteristic of the area's heritage. The majority of houses are finished in a limited number of materials.

New development should ensure that materials chosen are characteristic of the area. Stucco should not be used on any large uninterrupted surfaces facing the street. To create a cohesive image and to avoid an overly busy exterior, a minimum number of different finishing materials should be used.

6 INTERNAL DESIGN AND FACILITIES

Britannia has traditionally been a family area and it should continue to provide units suitable for families with children. New development should ensure that units with two or more bedrooms are suitable for families with children. Desirable features of such housing include: ground orientation (i.e. easy access to the ground), adequate play space, and observable open space.

7 OPEN SPACE

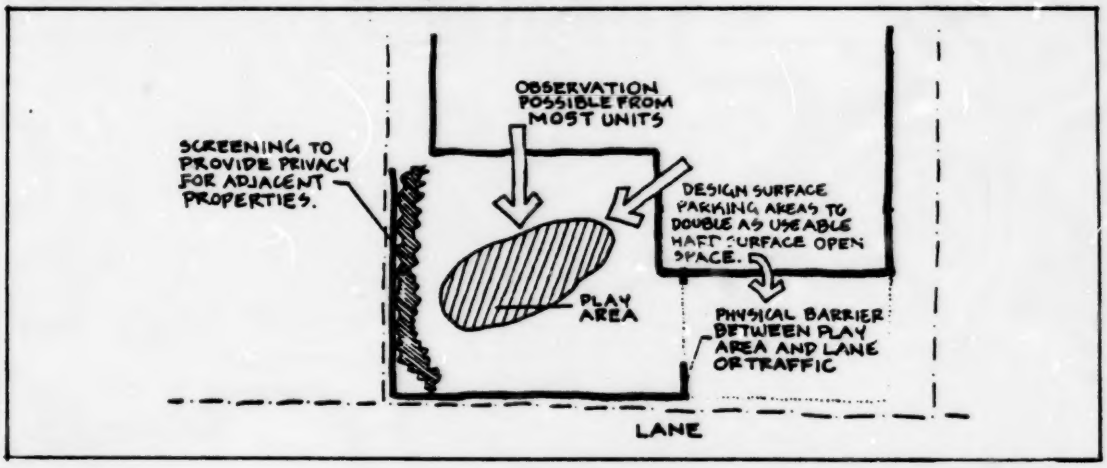
Britannia is in Grandview-Woodland which is the most park-deficient area of the city. Useable private open space is therefore important. New development should:

(a) Create open space that meets the needs of family housing by being useable, separated from the lane and street traffic, and in the case of children's play areas, easily observed from the units (Figure 12).

(b) Enhance the livability of units by providing roof decks and balconies in higher-density development.

(c) Designate useable private open space areas for infill development that respect the private open space area of the principal building.

Figure 12. Example of Open Space Treatment


OBSERVATION POSSIBLE FROM MOST UNITS
SCREENING TO PROVIDE PRIVACY FOR ADJACENT PROPERTIES.
DESIGN SURFACE PARKING AREAS TO DOUBLE AS USEABLE HARD SURFACE OPEN SPACE.
PLAY AREA
PHYSICAL BARRIER BETWEEN PLAY AREA AND LANE OR TRAFFIC
LANE

8 LANDSCAPING

As in most areas that were originally single-family neighbourhoods, Britannia's front yards were treated in a formal manner with lawns to act as linear visual open space from the street. Recent development at a higher density has used landscaping treatments and materials that are not characteristic to the area.

Ground-level units in new development and conversions require some screening to ensure privacy for the units and open space areas. Unfortunately, this often results in a series of walls and screens blocking views of the building from the street, and a barren property line condition that is out of character with the area. The closing of views to ground-level units could also result in security problems by reducing visibility from the street. New development should provide privacy for ground-level units while creating visual interest along the street edge.

New development should:

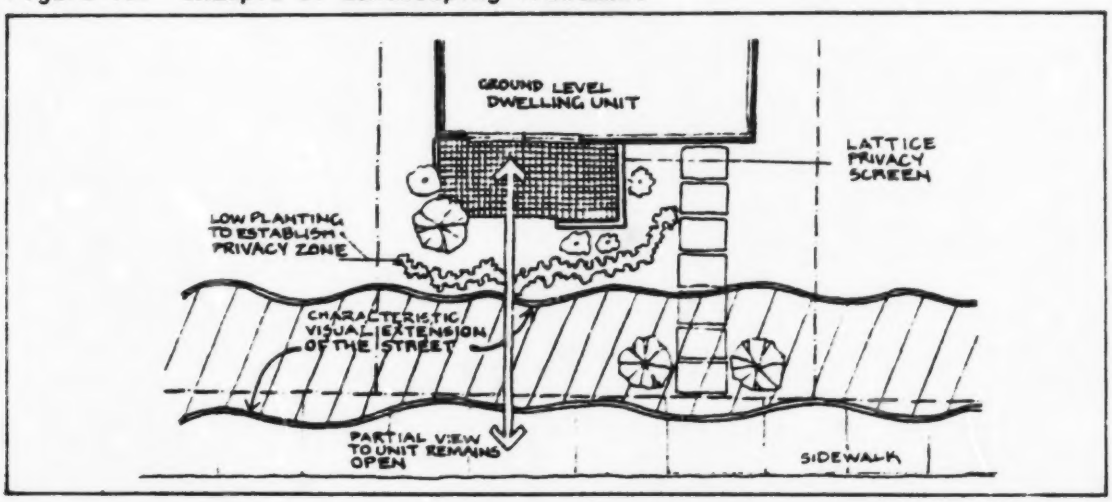
(a) Encourage landscaping treatments that are simple and in character and avoid using uncharacteristic materials such as bark mulch, gravel and low-maintenance ground covers.

(b) Ensure the continuity of visual open space by locating heavy planting for screening away from the front property line.

(c) Encourage screening materials that allow views and light to penetrate, especially when close to the street. Lattice work screens and plant materials are preferable to solid fences.

(d) Enhance near views from development along the industrial edge by providing attractive landscaping that also screens the industrial uses.

Figure 13. Example of Landscaping Treatment


GROUND LEVEL DWELLING UNIT
LATTICE PRIVACY SCREEN
LOW PLANTING TO ESTABLISH PRIVACY ZONE
CHARACTERISTIC VISUAL EXTENSION OF THE STREET
PARTIAL VIEW TO UNIT REMAINS OPEN
SIDEWALK

APPENDIX

Submission Requirements

For basic submission requirements for development permit applications, applicants should refer to the checklists prepared by the Permits and Licenses Department. For approval of a conditional use or relaxation of regulations, additional contextual information should be provided as follows:

(a) Site plan indicating all affected adjacent properties bounding the subject site;

(b) Elevation or photo-montage indicating the facades of at least two adjacent buildings on either side of the site in question; and

(c) Site plan indicating the location of windows, prominent landscape elements, and the uses of rooms in the buildings directly adjacent to the subject site.